

# Layout and Appearance

## Guidelines on formatting your assignments

## Overview

These are general guidelines for formatting and submitting your work. Please use these guidelines where you have not received specific instructions on formatting from your lecturer. Advice includes formatting specifications such as type, font and alignment, figures and tables, footnotes and endnotes, and submission of work.

## Formatting specifications

All written work should be typed on a computer. Feel free to hand-write your notes, but not the final masterpiece. If you don't have access to a computer at home, there are many on campus, in the libraries and numerous computer labs. It is critical that your lecturer can read your work.

What your document should look like	
Appearance	Word processed, <u>not</u> hand written.
Paper size	A4 & printed on both sides where possible.
Margins	2.5cm
Page numbering	Every page, beginning at 1.
Borders	None. And no other fancy Clipart is required.

## Type, alignment, spacing and paragraphs

Fonts, text alignment and spacing can be changed in your word-processing program. If no font type is specified then the standard choice is 12pt Times New Roman, with text left-aligned.

What the contents of your document should look like	
Font type	Times New Roman or Arial
Font size	11 or 12 pt
Headings	Depends on the type of assignment, e.g. reports may need numbered headings. Bold and left-aligned is acceptable. Aim for readability. Use the 'Header' function for a heading to appear on every page.
Header and Footer	The standard option is to include the page number and a shortened title at the top left of your Header, and your name top right. Shorten the title to ensure there is space for your name.

Alignment of text	Be consistent and apply only one style to your text. Use: <u>either</u> left-aligned – the text lines up straight against the left margin <u>or</u> fully justified – the left and right edges of the text line up straight against the left and right margins.
Spacing	Leave one space between sentences. Use double line spacing within paragraphs. Between paragraphs, spacing depends on whether they are blocked or indented. See example following.

## Blocked/Indented paragraphs

The general preference is to use block paragraphs, but check with your lecturer if you are unsure. Be consistent, whichever you use.

**Blocked paragraphs** have an extra space between them. Do not indent.

Blocked paragraphs are separated from each other by an additional blank line space. Do not indent the first line of a paragraph when using this style.

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**Indented paragraphs** follow on from each other with no extra space. The first line is indented from the left margin.

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## Figures and tables

If you need to include figures (i.e. graphs, pictures, charts, maps or diagrams) and/or tables in your work but have not received specific instructions, use the following guidelines. You can place them within the text itself, or at the end as an appendix. Check your chosen referencing style for more detailed instructions.

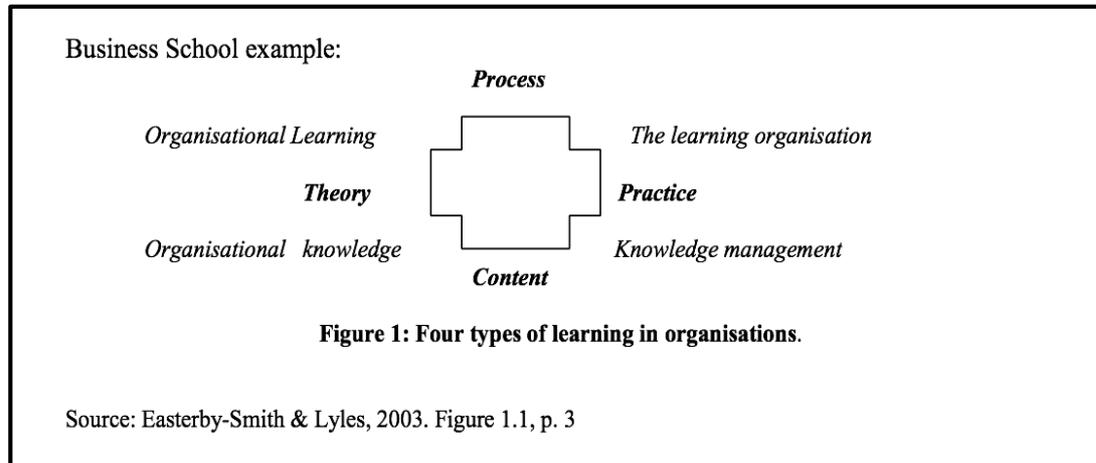
Consider whether the figures and/or tables are necessary for clarity. Include them in the body of the document if their presence directly illustrates your point. If, for example, a whole paragraph refers to a particular graph, then it would be most effective to place it directly below the paragraph.

## Naming, numbering and noting

Number each figure and table consecutively and give each a descriptive title. Figures may need a 'legend' to identify things such as scale, direction of view or orientation.

### Q. Example: Place the name of the figure below the figure

Cite author(s), date of publication and page number.



### Q. Example: Place the name of the table above the table

Survey Questions	% Respondents Positive
It was beneficial to have common material used in the assessment tasks for the three subjects	86%
Writing the <i>Communication</i> report on the company used for the first assessment task in <i>Accounting</i> helped me develop a better understanding of the importance of effective communication in accounting	76%
Studying report writing and writing a report in <i>Communication</i> prepared me for writing my <i>Economics</i> report	85%
Presenting on the economics case study in my <i>Communication</i> class before writing the individual report for <i>Economics</i> improved my understanding of the case	82%
Using common material in the three subjects has helped develop my understanding of effective communication within business	86%

Source: Brooman-Jones, Cunningham & Hannah, 2011, p. A8

### Some figures or tables may need notes to provide one or more of the following:

- Specific information on a particular item in the figure/table
- General information on the figure/table as a whole
- Source information (if copied/adapted from another source)

Place any notes directly below the relevant figure or table.

## Appearance

Whatever your reason for including figures or tables, aim for readability.

- Mark all axes clearly on graphs.
- Use descriptive column headings on tables.

- Type size is generally smaller than the text in the paragraph, but no smaller than 8 pt, and no larger than 14 pt.
- Place them close to the paragraph where they are first mentioned.
- Do not extend them outside the page margins.
- Do not split a table over two pages (unless it is large); leave a small gap at the bottom of the page and carry it over to the next page.
- Alignment of data within table columns depends on the type of data and other specific requirements, but generally the following applies:
  - Whole numbers to be right-aligned.
  - Decimals to be aligned to decimal points.
  - Text in columns to be left-aligned.

## Appendices — a final word

If the figure and/or table provides further evidence but is not critical to illustrate your argument, then include it as an appendix and refer to it in your text, like this:

“As can be seen in Appendix 1, the elephant population is in rapid decline.”

## Footnotes and endnotes

Academic writing sometimes requires notes to the main text. These notes may contain information to supplement or explain the main text, and/or information about your sources. The notes may be displayed as footnotes (at the bottom of the page) or endnotes (at the end of the work). Notes are numbered in a single sequence throughout a piece of work and normally set one or two points smaller than the general text. Most word-processing software has a footnote/endnote function that inserts numbers and formats notes automatically.

## Reference list / Bibliography

Your reference list should come at the end of the assignment. Depending on your chosen referencing/citation style, it might also be called a Bibliography. It should have the heading ‘References’ or ‘Bibliography’ and each source should have its own line. The formatting of the citations themselves should adhere to your chosen referencing style. Refer to [\*The General Guide to Referencing\*](#) for the glorious details about how to properly acknowledge sources in academic writing.

## Submission of work

### Title page or cover sheet

The Title page contains some or all of these details for identification. You could include a header and footer on this page to ensure that nothing goes astray.

- Name and student number (if group work, list all members’ information)
- Course ID
- Title of work being submitted
- Lecturer and/or tutor/teacher name
- Date submitted

A separate cover sheet and/or submission slip may also be required. Attach this to the front of your work. Some courses will provide one for you.

## Online submission

When asked to submit your assignment online through Moodle, there are a couple of considerations: the *size* of the file; and its *name*.

### **File size**

Saving your assignment at the right *size* is important because large files (over 10MB) can be difficult or impossible to upload.

### **Reducing PDF file size**

PDF files are supported by most platforms – Windows, Linux, Mac OS – and the size of the file will depend upon what is in it; word documents with just text tend to be smaller than those that include images and graphical information. Aim to keep the size of your file below 10MB, unless you have been advised otherwise. There are many ways of compressing them to make them smaller. Here are just a few.

#### **Adobe Acrobat**

1. Open your PDF Document in Adobe Acrobat Pro
2. Go to “File” > “Save As Other”
3. Click on “Reduced Size PDF”
4. Choose a version from the “Acrobat Version Compatibility” dropdown. After you’ve saved it, check that the file size is more appropriate
5. Click “OK”
6. Add a new file name for your document and choose a location to save the document
7. Click “Save”

**PDF Squeezer** is a PDF compression tool for Mac OS that is available as an App from the internet. A PDF Squeezer alternative is available for all platforms, and the tool reduces the file size of large PDF documents.

#### **Reducing image size in Word documents**

If you have inserted images into your document, then the file size is likely to be larger than normal. This generally makes your file slow to open and up- or download. By simply compressing the images, you can reduce the overall file size. This is done via the Format tab.

1. First click on the image you want to resize
2. Click on the “Format” / “Picture tools” tab
3. Click on “Compress Pictures”
4. Select the options you require
5. Click “Save”

Keep in mind that reducing the size of the image will also reduce quality. If it is critical to maintain the quality of images (for example, if you are a visual art student submitting images of your work), then your lecturer, teacher or tutor will have good advice: ask them.

## **File name**

Giving your file a particular *name* not only identifies your file from other students, but will also help you keep track of your assignments because they will be in a consistent format.

In general: Find out well before the due date whether your lecturer, teacher or tutor has a preference for file size or name.

Use the following standards in the absence of specific instructions from your lecturer, teacher or tutor. Their advice may appear in the course description or be provided through a student forum. If in doubt, ask them first.

### **Naming your files**

Having a system, or standard method, of naming your digital files gives you a good chance of finding them again. It also helps with the submission of your work. Again, your lecturer, teacher or tutor may have a preference so ask them for advice.

In the absence of specific instructions from your lecturer, teacher or tutor, use the following standard format every time you submit your work online:

coursecode\_assessmentnumber\_yourname\_studentID.doc

In this format, the elements are:

1. coursecode  
This is a set of letters and numbers that is unique for each course you study.  
*Example:* LITCI1006
2. assessmentnumber  
Number your assessments in the same way they appear on your descriptions, usually starting at 1.
3. yourname  
This need only be a shortened version of your name, as your student ID is also supplied. Include your first initial followed by the first four letters of your surname, like this (if your name is Jo Student):  
*Example:* jstud
4. studentID  
This is your FedUni student identification number.  
*Example:* 21214237
5. .docx  
This is 'file extension' identifies the type of document you are uploading. It goes at the end of the file name after a dot, and is usually only three characters long. It tells the computer which program to use to open the file. Common file types are: .doc, .docx, .pdf, .xml, .jpg, .txt, .rtf

*Standard format example:* LITCI1006\_1\_jstud\_21214237.docx

## Submission checklist

These may seem obvious, but check off the following before you submit your work:

- What your lecturer specified as method of submission.
- If submitting electronically, save it and submit it as a Microsoft Word document (.doc or .docx).
- Make a copy of the final version and keep as a record.
- All required content is there and in the right order.
- If required, your reference list/bibliography should be after your main body of work.
- Appendices are attached near the end, depending on what referencing system you are using.
- Pages are stapled securely in the top left-hand corner. No paper clips.
- Do not use folders unless instructed to do so.
- Submit your work by the due date (an extension may be granted in certain cases, but it should be confirmed with your lecturer/tutor/teacher ahead of time).
- Submit your work to the right place and person.

## Penalties for poor presentation

If you submit your work without meeting basic presentation standards, you can incur penalties. Many lecturers can be generous; however, you would be wise to avoid submitting a poorly presented assignment. Not only will you risk the outcomes listed below, but you also won't be doing yourself any favours; your future boss won't accept underperformance.

- Your work may be returned and you may be required to resubmit (lucky outcome).
- Your work may be marked down (not so lucky).
- Your work may not be accepted or credited in your final grade (bad).